

ALASKA TRAUMA REGISTRY CALENDAR

State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health
Community Health and Emergency Medical Services

~November 2001~

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	EMS 8	Symposium 9	→ 10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Booster Seats – Pass the Word

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for Alaskan children after age one and the second leading cause of hospitalization. From 1991 through 1999, 94 children ages 4 to 8 years were hospitalized because of injuries sustained in a car crash. Almost one-third had no protective restraints at all and more than half were using only a seat belt at the time of the crash.

We now know that after age three, children run an extra risk of injury in car crashes if they are restrained by seat belts only, because seat belts are designed for adults. Many children cannot wear a seat belt properly because instead of riding over the chest, the belt cuts across the neck. In a crash, this could cause serious or even fatal injuries.

Children usually out-grow forward-facing safety seats at forty pounds, at which time they need to be restrained in belt-positioning booster seats until they are big enough to fit properly in an adult seat belt.

When can an older child switch from a booster seat to a seatbelt?

- * When the child can ride for an extended period with the lap portion of the belt fitting low and tight across the upper thigh, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt resting over the shoulder and across the chest, not on the neck.
- * When the child weighs between about 60 and 80 lbs and is at least 4' 9" tall
- * When a child can sit with his or her back straight against the vehicle seat back cushion with knees bent over the seat's edge without slouching

Please post this information for your emergency room nurses so that they can talk to their patients about this important protection. And, in order to track booster seat use through the trauma registry, it is important that they ask the question: **Was your child in a *booster seat, child seat, seat belt, or not restrained at the time of the accident?***

Questions? Call Gordon Glaser 269-3433 or Karen Lawfer 465-8632